

Teachers' Notes

THE VALUE OF READING

Much research has been done on the importance of reading and all studies show the same results. Students who read fluently, frequently and with pleasure consistently gain higher test scores at school as well as in their further studies, not only in English, but across the whole curriculum. Reading and enjoying the stories on this website will help your students to learn to love reading, and this will benefit every aspect of their education.

Learning to read is important, but learning to love reading is even more important.

Here are ten reasons for encouraging your students to love reading:

- Reading improves language skills, vocabulary and grammar
- Reading strengthens brain connections
- Reading increases depth of knowledge
- Reading improves memory
- Reading helps develop a creative imagination
- Reading improves concentration
- Reading encourages self-discipline
- Reading increases confidence
- Reading relaxes the body and calms the mind
- Reading improves critical thinking

HOW TO USE THE EXERCISES

1. The pre-reading questions

Prediction is an important element in comprehension. Use the pre-reading questions to help the reader to grasp the theme of the story and understand its progression. The pre-reading questions will help the reader to guess correctly the meanings of words that they may not know.

- Before reading, make sure the students have any background information they may need.
- Encourage discussion around the topic of the story, presented in the pre-reading questions.
- Make sure they know key items of vocabulary.

2. Reading the story

Allow the students time to read the story themselves in silence. Be ready to help if they stumble over unfamiliar words.

3. The exercises

The exercises follow a progression. The first exercise, entitled **How much did you understand?**, encourages students to check their overall grasp of the story and its structure. This exercise may take the form of putting sentences in the correct order, or offering true/false choices, or filling in key words. Students may have to read the story through again quickly before they can complete this exercise.

The next exercise (or exercises) focuses in more detail. There are more specific questions about time, place, person, or types of sentence. Please note that the purpose of these questions is not to teach grammar or vocabulary. They are all aimed at helping students to increase their reading comprehension skills. Some concentrate on the comprehension of individual words. Some encourage open-ended replies.

In the **What were they feeling?** exercises, the reader focuses on the personal impact of the events in the story. These questions encourage empathy with the characters.

The next type of exercise (often entitled **What do you think?**) aims to help the student think more widely, to talk about their own ideas and responses to the story, and increase their confidence in expressing their own opinions.

Where it's appropriate, further activities are suggested, for example enacting the story as a play, thinking of a new title, looking at similar stories on this website, or retelling the story to friends.

One final word. We hope that you and the students will enjoy the stories.

Stories from Oromia



[Small map with region highlighted]

Oromia is the largest region of Ethiopia. The people speak the Oromo language, and have their own special culture.

The Oromo people have their own ways of judging quarrels, and you will find out some of them when you read these stories.

The stories

Originally told by

1. Fine Red Feathers	<i>Worku Debelo</i>
2. The Dog Fight	<i>Mohammed Kuyu</i>
3. The Cats and the Mice	<i>Merga Debelo</i>
4. The Best Home	<i>Mohammed Kuyu</i>
5. The Leopard and the Squirrel	<i>Abdulkadir Guracha</i>
6. The Little Sister	<i>Tesfaye Chibsa</i>
7. The Rat King's Son	<i>Merga Debelo</i>
8. The Mother-in-law	<i>Abiyot Legesse</i>
9. The Grateful Animals	<i>Mariam Mohammed</i>
10. The Jackal and the Rabbit	<i>Mohammed Kuyu</i>
11. The Baboon Chief	<i>Bonsamo Miesso</i>
12. The Wicked Stepmother	<i>Merga Debelo</i>

With thanks to the Oromia Education Bureau and the translators, Merga Debelo, Beker Hadji and Michael Ambatchew

© **Stories retold by Elizabeth Laird**

© **Exercises written by Elizabeth Laird and Ann Rossiter**

© **Illustrations by Yosef Kebede and Eric Robson**

Fine Red Feathers

A story from Shoa



Before you read the story

Talk with a friend

- Talk about being kind and generous.
- Talk about a time when somebody was kind to you.
- How did you feel?

A keleche is a special object which Oromo people use when they make agreements.

Now read the story.

Once there was a man with two sons. He was very rich, with three stables full of cows.

The man loved his first son more than his second son. Before he died, he said to the older boy, "My three stables full of cows are for you."

But to his younger son he said, "You can have the old rooster with the red feathers."

The man died, and the first son took the three stables full of cows.

"Here, brother, take your rooster," he said to the younger son, and he laughed.

The two brothers lived near each other. One was rich now and the other was poor.

One day, the rich brother became sick and he went to the medicine man.

"Only one thing can make you better," the medicine man said. "You must kill and eat a rooster. It must be a beautiful bird with fine red feathers."

The rich brother went back to his house.

"What did the medicine man say?" his wife asked.

"He says I must kill and eat a rooster," the rich man said. "It must be a fine one, with red feathers. Oh! Oh! I am so sick! But what can we do? We haven't got a rooster."

"No," said his wife, "but your brother has one."

"Then run to my brother," the rich man said. "Ask him to give me his rooster."

The wife ran to the poor man's house.

"Your brother is very sick," she said. "He needs to eat a rooster with fine red feathers. Only that can make him better."

At once the poor brother called his wife.

"Catch the rooster and kill it," he said, "and take it to my brother. It's the only thing I have, but I will give it to him happily."

The rich man's wife took the rooster back to her house, killed it and spilled its blood. Then she cooked it and gave it to her husband.

But she never thanked her husband's brother.

The rich man ate the rooster.

"This is wonderful!" he said. "I feel better already."

He left his house and went to see his friends.

"Look!" he said. "I'm better. The medicine man was right. I ate a rooster with fine red feathers and now I'm well again."

But he never thanked his brother.

One day, the rich man woke up early in the morning.

"Something has happened," he thought. "I feel strange today."

He touched his face. It felt soft. He touched his arms and legs. They felt soft too. He jumped up and woke his wife.

"Wife, look at me," he said. "What has happened?"

His wife started to laugh.

"Where did all these red feathers come from?" she said. "They are on your face and arms and legs. Take them off."

She tried to pull some feathers off her husband's face.

"Ow! Oo! Stop!" he shouted. "That hurts!"

His wife looked frightened.

"Husband," she said, "this is terrible. The feathers are growing out of your body. Quick, go back to the medicine man at once!"

Her husband ran back to the medicine man.

"Help me!" he said. "Take these feathers away!"

The medicine man shook his head.

"I can't help you," he said. "We must take this problem to the elders."

The elders listened carefully to the rich man's story.

"You have been unfair to your brother," they said. "You took all your father's cows and gave none of them to your brother. He had only one thing, a rooster, and you took his rooster too. That was wrong. There is a curse on you now. If your brother forgives you, the feathers will fall off. Take the keleche to your brother. Ask him to spit on it. If he spits on it, you will know he has forgiven you. Then the feathers will go."

So the rich man took the keleche to his brother.

"Brother, I was unfair to you," he said. "You are a poor man. You had only one rooster, but I took it from you. Please forgive me and spit on the keleche."

So the poor man forgave his brother and spat on the keleche. The rich brother gave him a stable of cows and the feathers fell off him.

The elders smiled.

"The curse has gone," they said to the rich man. "Now remember the lessons of the feathers. Be kind and generous in future, and never be unfair."

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

These sentences retell the story. Which are true and which are false?

1. A rich man had two sons, and he loved the older one best.
2. When the old man died, the younger son became rich.
3. The medicine man told the older brother to kill and eat a cow.
4. The rich man's wife bought a rooster with red feathers.
5. When the rich man ate the rooster, he became better.
6. The rich man thanked his brother for the rooster.
7. The rich man grew feathers on his face and arms and legs.
8. The medicine man told the rich man to go to the elders.
9. The elders made the rich man spit on the keleche.
10. The poor man forgave his brother, and the curse went.

B. Describe the people in the story

Choose the best endings for these sentences.

1. The rich brother.....
 2. The poor brother.....
 3. The rich brother's wife.....
 4. The elders.....
- a) gave good advice.
 - b) was kind and generous.
 - c) was selfish and ungrateful.
 - d) was frightened of the feathers.

C. Actions and Results

In the story, many ACTIONS have a RESULT.

Choose the ending which shows the RESULT of each action from the box below.

1. A man loved his elder son more than his younger son, so...
 2. The rich brother became sick, so...
 3. The rich man's wife said to the poor man, "Your brother is sick and needs to eat your rooster," so ...
 4. The rich man didn't thank his poor brother, so ...
 5. The elders said to the older brother, "If your brother forgives you, and spits on the keleche, your feathers will fall off," so ...
 6. The rich brother agreed that he had been unfair, so ...
- a)... the younger brother spat on the keleche, and the curse was removed.
 - b)... he went to the medicine man.
 - c)... he gave his brother a stable of cows.

- d)... the poor man gave his rooster to his brother.
- e)... he gave his elder son many cows, but he gave his younger son only one red rooster.
- f)... red feathers began to grow on him.

Did you notice that we use the word SO to show the RESULT of an ACTION?

D. What do *you* think?

Was the old man a good father to his two sons?

The rich man was selfish. Was his wife selfish too?

Did the elders give good advice to the rich brother?

Did you like the ending of the story?



[[Click here for the answers to the exercises](#)]

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

A. How much did you understand?

1. A rich man had two sons, and he loved the older one best.
Right
2. When the old man died, the younger son became rich.
*Wrong. **The older son** became rich.*
3. The medicine man told the older brother to kill and eat a cow.
*Wrong. He told the older brother to eat a **rooster**.*
4. The rich man's wife bought a rooster with red feathers.
*Wrong. **She took the rooster from her brother-in-law.***
5. When the rich man ate the rooster, he became better.
Right.
6. The rich man thanked his brother for the rooster.
*Wrong. He **never** thanked his brother.*
7. The rich man grew feathers on his face and arms and legs.
Right.
8. The medicine man told the rich man to go to the elders.
Right
9. The elders said that the rich man should spit on the keleche.
*Wrong. The elders said that **the poor man** should spit on the keleche.*
10. The poor man forgave his brother, and the curse went.
Right.

B. Describe the people in the story

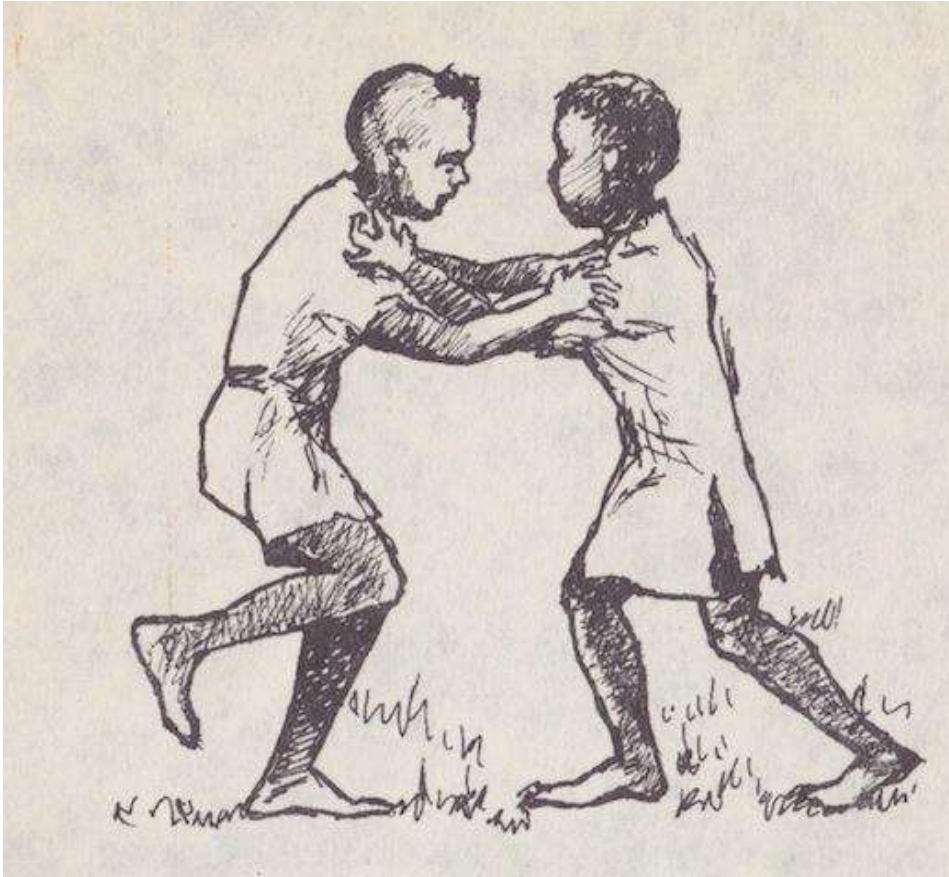
1. The rich brother **was selfish and ungrateful.**
2. The poor brother **was kind and generous.**
3. The rich brother's wife **was frightened of the feathers.**
4. The elders **gave good advice.**

C. Actions and Results

- 1/e. A man loved his elder son more than his younger son, so **he gave his elder son many cows, but he gave his younger son only one red rooster.**
- 2/b. The rich brother became sick, so **he went to the medicine man.**
- 3/d. The rich man's wife said to the poor man, "Your brother is sick and needs to eat your rooster," so **the poor man gave his rooster to his brother.**
- 4/f. The rich man didn't thank his poor brother, so **red feathers began to grow on the him.**
- 5/a. The elders said to the older brother, "If your brother forgives you, and spits on the keleche, your feathers will fall off," so **the younger brother spat on the keleche and the curse was removed.**
- 6/c. The rich brother agreed that he had been unfair, so **he gave his brother a stable of cows.**

The Dog Fight

A story from Bale



Before you read the story

- How does a fight start?
- How does it stop?
- What do YOU do if you see people fighting or quarrelling?

Now read the story

One day, a woman threw a bone out of her house. Two dogs started fighting for it. A wise old man called Robele Megerra saw them.

"Stop those dogs!" he called out. "If you don't, the boys will start fighting too."

Nobody listened to Robele Megerra.

A few minutes later, a boy came up the path. The big dog was fighting with his little dog. He ran up and began to beat the big dog with a stick. At the same time, another boy was coming home from school. He saw the boy with the stick. He was hitting his big dog.

"What are you doing?" he shouted. "Stop hitting my dog!"

Soon the two boys were fighting.

"Stop those boys!" called out Robele Megerra. "If you don't, their mothers will start fighting too."

Nobody listened to Robele Megerra.

Just then, a woman came out of her hut.

"Why is that boy hitting my son?" she said, and she ran up to the boys and tried to stop the fight.

Then another woman came out of her hut.

"What are you doing?" she shouted to the first woman. "Stop hitting my son!"

Soon the two women were fighting.

"Stop those women!" called out Robele Megerra. "If you don't, their husbands will start fighting too."

Nobody listened to Robele Megerra.

Just then, a man was coming home from the fields.

"Why is that woman hitting my wife?" he said, and he ran up to the women and tried to stop the fight.

Another man was driving his cattle home for the night.

"What are you doing?" he shouted to the first man. "Stop hitting my wife!"

Soon the two men were fighting.

"Stop those men!" cried Robele Megerra. "If you don't, their clans will start fighting too."

Nobody listened to Robele Megerra.

Everyone heard the noise of the fight. They ran up and looked. Soon, all the men from the two clans were fighting each other. The fighting was very bad.

At last the battle ended. Sixteen men were dead, eight from one clan and eight from the other. Everyone was very sad.

"What are we going to do now?" they said. "How are we going to end this war?"

They went to see the elders. The elders discussed the matter for a long time.

At last they said, "You must pay for every dead man with the life of another man."

"But if we do that," everyone said, "we'll kill another sixteen men."

"Then you must pay a hundred cows for each dead man," the elders said.

"But if we do that," the people said, "we will lose one thousand six hundred cows. Then we will have nothing."

A crazy old man was passing the elders' meeting.

"What's the matter? What are you talking about?" he asked them. They told him all about it, and he listened carefully.

At last he said, "If you kill sixteen more men, everyone will be very sad. And if you give away all your cows, you will all be very poor. I know the answer to your problem."

"Tell us, tell us!" everyone said.

"Each clan must take its silver necklace," the old man said, "and throw it into the river. Throw away your hatred with the necklaces, and forgive each other."

So the people took the necklaces of their clans and threw them into the river. They forgave each other, and they never fought again.

[[Click here to listen to the story](#)]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Robele Megele was a very wise man, but for a long time nobody listened to him. Choose the right words from the list below to show the advice he gave.

1. If you don't stop the dogs fighting, will start fighting too.
2. If you don't stop the boys fighting,will start fighting too.
3. If you don't stop the women fighting,will start fighting too.
4. If you don't stop the men fighting,will start fighting too.
5. If you kill more men, you will be.....
6. If you give away your cows, you will be

sad, their husbands, their clans, their mothers, poor, the boys

B. Who, what, where and how many?

1. What were the dogs fighting for?
2. Where was the second boy when he saw the dogs?
3. What did the second woman say to the first woman?
4. What was the second man doing when he saw the women fighting?
5. Who listened to Robele Megerra?
6. How many men were killed?
7. Who was passing the elders' meeting?
8. What did the clans throw into the river?

C. Fill in the missing words

At the end of the story, the people of the village learn to live in peace.

Find the missing words in the story, and put them into the sentences below to show the old man's advice.

Each.....must.....its.....necklace and it into the

Throw.....your.....with your and each other.

D. What do you think?

When countries disagree with each other, how can they avoid going to war?

Are there ever good reasons for countries to go to war?

How can wars come to an end?



[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

A. How much did you understand?

1. If you don't stop the dogs fighting, **the boys** will start fighting too.
2. If you don't stop the boys fighting, **their mothers** will start fighting too.
3. If you don't stop the women fighting, **their husbands** will start fighting too.
4. If you don't stop the men fighting, **their clans** will start fighting too.
5. If you kill more men, you will be **sad**.
6. If you give away your cows, you will be **poor**.

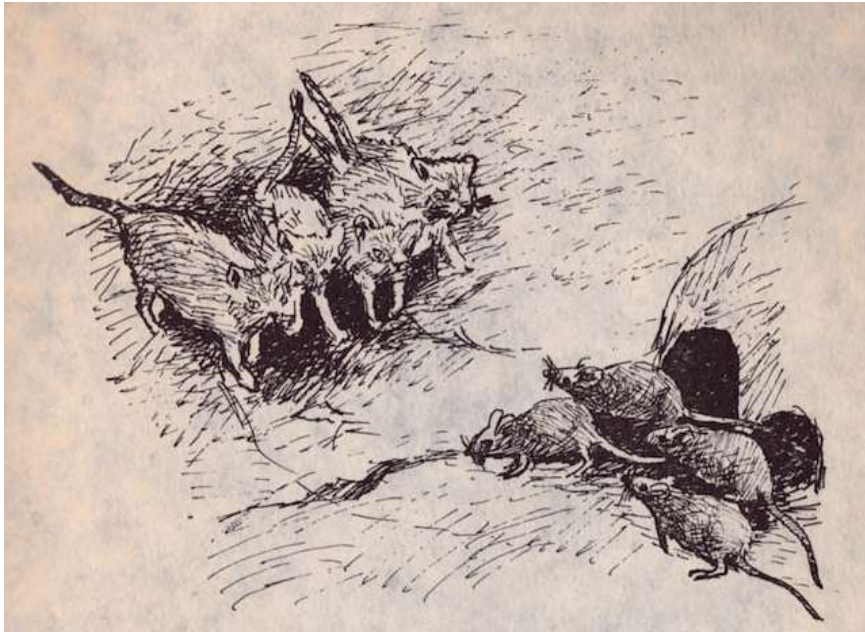
B. Who, what, where and how many?

1. What were the dogs fighting for?
A bone
2. Where was the second boy when he saw the dogs?
He was coming home from school.
3. What did the second woman say to the first woman?
"What are you doing? Stop hitting my son!"
4. What was the second man doing when he saw the women fighting?
He was driving his cattle home for the night.
5. Who listened to Robele Megerra?
No one
6. How many men were killed?
Sixteen
7. Who was passing the elders' meeting?
A crazy old man
8. What did the clans throw into the river?
Their necklaces and their hatred

C. Fill in the missing words

Each **clan** must **take** its **silver** necklace and **throw** it into the **river**.
Throw **away** your **hatred** with your **necklaces** and **forgive** each other.

A story from Wollega



Before you read the story

- Do you take care of your younger brothers or sisters?
- Do you take care of animals or plants?
- How do you take care of them?
- Who do you trust?
- Why do you trust them?

Now read the story.

A long time ago, the cats and the mice were friends. They worked together and played together. Cats married mice and mice married cats. They were happy.

But one day the mice became worried.

"Some of our relatives have gone," they said. "Where are they?"

"I haven't seen my uncle for a long time," one mouse said.

"And I've haven't seen my aunt," said another mouse.

"My sister isn't here any more," a third mouse said.

"And where's my brother?" said a fourth mouse.

An old mouse shook his head. He looked sad.

"I have bad news for you, my friends," he said. "The cats are eating us. We must be very careful. Soon they will eat us all."

The mice were very frightened. The mothers called to their children.

"Don't go outside," they said. "Be careful. The cats will catch you."

All the mice were careful now. They stayed inside their holes. They didn't like to go outside.

Now the cats were worried too.

"Where have all the mice gone?" they said. "We're hungry. We haven't got anything to eat."

"They're hiding from us," a big cat said. "How can we catch them?"

"I've got an idea," another cat said. "Let's go and visit the mice. We'll arrange a wedding. We'll ask for one of their daughters. We can ask her to marry one of our sons. The mice will make a big wedding feast. They'll all be together in one place. We can catch them all at the same time. It will be a great feast for us!"

"That's a very good idea," said all the other cats.

So the cats sent their elders to the mice.

"Give us one of your daughters," they said. "We want a wife for one of our sons."

The mice were very surprised.

"We don't trust you," they said. "You only want to eat us."

"No! No!" answered the cats. "We're very honest and sincere. We want to be your friends. It's true, a long time ago some of us ate some of you. But we must all forget that now. We'll never eat you again."

The mice looked at the cats. The cats were all smiling.

"All right," the mice said. "We agree. We will give one of our daughters to one of your sons."

The cats went home again. They were very happy.

"The wedding day will be wonderful," they said. "All the mice will come to the wedding. We will have a great feast. We'll catch and eat them all!"

The wedding day came. The mice were still very worried.

"Stay near your holes," they said to their children. "Look, the cats are coming. If they're nice to us, we'll be nice to them. But if they try to eat us, we'll be ready."

The cats came down the road. They were singing a wedding song.

"Can you hear the words of the song?" an old mouse asked a young one.

"Yes," the young mouse said.

"What are they?" asked the old mouse.

"They're singing,

Catch them and eat them,

Catch them and eat them,"

answered the young mouse.

"Then we must sing too," said old mouse, and he began to sing,

"Run, mice, run.

Run, mice, run!"

All the mice jumped into their holes and escaped. Then the cats arrived.

"Where are they?" they asked each other. "Where is the bride for our son?"

An old mouse put his head out of his hole.

"We've learned our lesson," he said. "When your enemies pretend to be your friends, you must be ready to run away."

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Who was telling the truth, and who was telling lies?

1. The old mice said, "The cats are eating us."

Was he telling the truth, or telling a lie?

2. The cats said to the mice, "We want a wife for one of our sons."

Were they telling the truth, or telling a lie?

3. "We're very honest and sincere," said the cats.

Were they telling the truth, or telling a lie?

4. "If they're nice to us, we'll be nice to them," said the mice.

Were they telling the truth, or telling a lie?

5. "We've learned our lesson," the old mouse said.

Was he telling the truth, or telling a lie?

B. What were they feeling?

Choose the right word from the list below to show what the characters in the story were feeling. You will need to use some words more than once.

1. When the cats and the mice were friends, they were feeling

2. When the old mouse heard that some of the mice's relatives were gone he was feeling

3. When the mice heard the bad news, they were feeling

4. When the mice stayed inside their holes, the cats were feeling

5. When the cats asked for one of the mice's daughters, the mice were feeling

6. When the mice agreed to the marriage, the cats were feeling

7. When the wedding day came, the mice were still feeling

frightened, happy, worried, sad, surprised

C. What do you think?

Read these questions, and talk about them with a friend.

Are you frightened of anyone?

Why are you frightened of them?

Is anyone frightened of you?

Why are they frightened of you?

What can you do to protect yourself?

D. Make up a song

The cats and the mice in this story make up songs. Can you make up a song about friends and enemies?



[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

A. How much did you understand?

1. The old mice said, "The cats are eating us."
He was telling the truth.
2. The cats said to the mice, "We want a wife for one of our sons."
They were telling a lie.
3. "We're very honest and sincere," said the cats.
They were telling a lie.
4. "If they're nice to us, we'll be nice to them," said the mice.
They were telling the truth.
5. "We've learned our lesson," the old mouse said.
He was telling the truth.

B. What were they feeling?

1. When the cats and the mice were friends, they were feeling **happy**.
2. When the old mouse heard that some of the mice's relatives were gone he was feeling **sad**.
3. When the mice heard the bad news, they were feeling **frightened**.
4. When the mice stayed inside their holes, the cats were feeling **worried**.
5. When the cats asked for one of the mice's daughters, the mice were feeling **surprised**.
6. When the mice agreed to the marriage, the cats were feeling **happy**.
7. When the wedding day came, the mice were still feeling **worried**.

The Best Home

A Story from Bale



Before you read the story

- What do you think is the best possible home?
- What does it look like?
- What is inside it ?

Now read the story.

An old man had two sons. One day, he called his sons and said to them, "Listen, my sons. I am an old man and soon I will die. But first, I want to see you in your own homes. Go away now, and build homes for yourselves. Come back to me after a month and show them to me."

The two sons went out of their father's house. The first one took his axe and went to look for trees. He found some tall ones near a road and began to cut them down. Soon he had a good pile of wood and he began to build his house.

The second son went to the house of his friends.

"Make me your brother," he said to his friend. "Let us be friends forever."

So he put his mouth to his friend's nipple, and his friend put his mouth to his nipple. And they became brothers.

The second son left his friend's house and met his brother in the road.

"How are you?" the first brother said. "I have built the walls of my first hut already. It's fine and big. Soon I will finish it. Have you built the walls of your hut yet?"

The second son smiled.

"Oh yes," he said. "I am building a fine home too."

The second brother went to visit another friend.

"Make me your brother, he said. "Let us be friends forever."

He put his mouth to his friend's nipple, and his friend put his mouth to his nipple. And they became brothers.

Again the second brother met the first brother in the road.

"I have built the roof of my first hut," said the first brother, "and now I am making the second hut."

"And I am making my second home too," the second brother said, and he went to visit his third friend.

A month passed, and the two brothers returned to their father.

"Well, my sons?" he said. "Have you built your new homes? Let's go and see them."

They went first to the oldest brother's home. Three fine new huts stood inside a strong fence.

"Well done, my son," the old man said.

He went to the first hut.

"Is anyone there?" he called out. "Visitors have arrived."

He waited.

"Is no one here?" he asked his son. "I'm tired. I want a stool to sit on."

"No one is here," the oldest son answered.

They went on to the next hut.

"Is anyone there?" the father called out. "I'm thirsty. I need a drink."

"No one is there," the oldest son answered.

They went on to the third hut.

"Who is there?" called out the old man. "I'm hungry. I want something to eat."

"The hut is empty," his son said. "There's nothing to eat here."

The old man shook his head.

"My son," he said, "this is not a home."

He turned to his second son.

"And you?" he said. "Have you built a home?"

"Yes, Father," the second son said. "Come with me."

He took his father to the house of his first friend.

"This is my father and this is my brother," he said to his friend.

His friend was very happy. He killed a sheep and made a big feast. They ate and drank happily together.

Then the younger son took his father to the house of his second friend.

"This is my father and this is my brother," he said.

The second friend was very happy too. He killed a goat and made a feast. The old man and his sons stayed there with their friends for a long time. Then they went on to another friend, and another, and another. At last they went home.

The old man smiled at his younger son.

"You have done well," he said. "You have learned an important lesson. A real home is not just a collection of huts. It is a place full of kindness and the love of friends."

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Read the sentences below. Who is speaking? Is it the father, the older son or the younger son?

1. "Build homes for yourselves," said.....
2. "Make me your brother. Let us be friends for ever," said.....
3. "I have built the walls of my first hut already. It is fine and big," said.....
4. "Oh yes, I am building a fine home too," said...
5. "Now I am making the second hut," said.....
6. "And I am making my second home too," said.....
7. "Is anyone there? Visitors have arrived," said.....
8. "The hut is empty. There's nothing to eat here," said.....
9. "This is my father and this is my brother," said.....
10. "A real home is not just a collection of huts," said.....

B. Houses and homes

A hut or a house is just a building.

A home is the place a person belongs to.

The meanings look nearly the same, but they are different. We use the word **home** in many different ways. Here are some of them.

"I live in Addis Ababa, but **my home** is in Awassa," said the girl.

This means that the girl's family live in Awassa, and perhaps she grew up there, but just now she is living in Addis Ababa.

"Come in and make yourself **at home**," says my friend, when he opens the door.

This means that my friend is welcoming me. He wants his home to be my home. He wants me to feel comfortable.

The boy left **home** when he grew up. He married a girl, and they made **a home** of their own.

This means that the boy stopped living with his parents. When he married, he started a new family in a new home.

Read these sentences. Choose the word **house** or **home** to fill the gaps.

1. There's a big new at the end of my street and three families live in it.
2. When I was a child, my was in Bale.
3. My husband and I want to move to a different
4. That is empty. No one is living there.
5. Does all your family live here? It's a real

C. What do you think?

Talk with a friend. Ask and answer these questions.

Do you feel that the place where you live is your real home?

Where is your real home?

Who lives there?

Do you want to make a different home one day?

D. Draw a picture

Draw a picture of the house that you would like to live in.



[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

A. How much did you understand?

1. "Build homes for yourselves," said **the father**.
2. "Make me your brother. Let us be friends for ever," said **the second son**.
3. "I have built the walls of my first hut already. It is fine and big," said **the first son**.
4. "Oh yes, I am building a fine home too," said **the second son**.
5. "Now I am making the second hut," said **the first son**.
6. "And I am making my second home too," said **the second son**.
7. "Is anyone there? Visitors have arrived," said **the father**.
8. "The hut is empty. There's nothing to eat here," said **the first son**.
9. "This is my father and this is my brother," said **the second son**.
10. "A real home is not just a collection of huts," said **the father**.

B. Houses and homes

1. There's a big new **house** at the end of my street and three families live in it.
2. When I was a child, my **home** was in Bale.
3. My husband and I want to move to a different **house**.
4. That **house** is empty. No one is living there.
5. Does all your family live here? It's a real **home**.

The Leopard and the Squirrel

A Story from Borena



Before you read the story

- What happens when friends do not tell the truth?
- Have you ever told lies to a friend?
- Was your friend angry with you?
- Why is it important to tell the truth?

Now read the story

Once upon a time, there was a leopard and a squirrel. They were friends. They had a herd of goats and they looked after the goats together. One day, the leopard went out with the goats. The next day, the squirrel took the goats out.

The leopard was not a clever goatherd. He never found good grass for the goats. He never gave them enough to eat. When he took them out, the goats always came back hungry.

But the squirrel was very clever. She never went out with the goats alone. She met her mother outside in the fields and her mother came to help her. The squirrel's mother climbed into the trees and pulled off the leaves. She threw them down to the goats and they ate them happily.

One day, the leopard said to the squirrel, "You take the goats out and they always come home happy. But I take them out and they always come home hungry. Why is that?"

The squirrel laughed at him.

"Oh," she said. "I'm much cleverer than you. I always take the branding iron with me and I tie it to their tails. The branding iron frightens them. 'Oh!' they think. 'This branding iron will hurt us,' and they run about looking for food. But they are lazy with you. They just stand in one place. They don't try to look for food."

The leopard was angry.

"This stupid squirrel is not telling me the truth," he thought. "She's laughing at me. I'll follow her tomorrow and watch."

So the next day, the leopard followed the squirrel. He was careful. He didn't want her to see him. He watched her from far away.

The squirrel stopped under a tree and called out, "Mother! Come and help me! I have to find food for the goats!"

The squirrel's mother at once began to pull leaves off the branches and began to help her daughter.

"Look at that!" thought the leopard. "The squirrel's mother comes to help her. She's pulling leaves off the trees for the goats. They don't have any branding irons at all."

He felt very angry.

"The squirrel thinks I'm stupid," he thought. "She was trying to trick me. But I'll show her!"

The next day, it was his turn to take out the goats. He took them past the tree and called out, "Mother! Come and help me! I have to find food for the goats."

The squirrel's mother ran down from the tree. At once the leopard jumped on her and killed her.

The next day, it was the squirrel's turn again.

She drove the goats past the tree and called out, "Mother! Come and help me! I have to find food for the goats."

But no one answered. No one came.

"Mother!" the squirrel called again. "Where are you?"

But the squirrel's mother wasn't there.

The squirrel began to cry.

"Oh Mother, Mother," she cried. "You're dead. You're dead! And the leopard killed you."

The squirrel cried all day and her eyes became red. In the evening she drove the goats home again.

"What's the matter, squirrel?" said the leopard. "Why are your eyes red?"

"I met the medicine man today," answered the squirrel. "He gave me some wonderful medicine. I put it in my eyes. With this medicine I will become very big and strong."

"I would like some of that medicine," said the leopard. "Did you get some for me?"

"Yes," said the squirrel. "I have some for you. But you won't like it."

"Why not?" asked the leopard.

"Because it will bring tears to your eyes," said the squirrel.

"Give me the medicine now," said the leopard, and he lay down and opened his eyes.

Then the squirrel took some stones and put them on the fire. They became red hot. The squirrel put them on the leopard's eyes and he became blind.

"Take the stones away!" cried the leopard. "Give me back my eyes!"

"I'll give you back your eyes," said the squirrel, "when you bring back my mother."

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Three of these sentences about the story are false. Which are they?

1. The leopard and the squirrel both looked after the same herd of goats.
2. The leopard and the squirrel looked after the goats on different days.
3. The leopard was cleverer than the squirrel at looking after the goats.
4. The squirrel's mother helped her to find food for the goats.
5. The leopard believed the squirrel's story about the branding iron.
6. The squirrel called her mother to come down from the tree and the leopard killed her.
7. The squirrel had red eyes because she had put medicine in them.
8. "You won't like the medicine," the squirrel said to the leopard.
9. The squirrel blinded the leopard by putting hot stones on his eyes.
10. "My mother will bring back your eyes," the squirrel said to the leopard.

B. Answers with "because"

Choose the right ending to these sentences from the list below.

1. The goats ate well when they went out with the squirrel because.....
 2. The leopard was angry with the squirrel because.....
 3. The leopard killed the squirrel's mother because.....
 4. The squirrel began to cry because.....
 5. The leopard wanted the medicine because.....
 6. The squirrel put hot stones in the leopard's eyes because.....
- a)he wanted to become big and strong.
 - b)he wanted to punish the squirrel.
 - c)her mother threw leaves down from the trees.
 - d)the squirrel was not telling the truth.
 - e)she wanted to punish the leopard.
 - f)her mother was dead.

C. What do you think?

What is the moral of this story? What does it teach us?
Can you think of another title to this story?



[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Click here to return to the exercises]
[Click here to return to the story]

A. How much did you understand?

1. The leopard and the squirrel both looked after the same herd of goats.

True

2. The leopard and the squirrel looked after the goats on different days.

True

3. The leopard was cleverer than the squirrel at looking after the goats.

False. The squirrel was cleverer than the leopard.

4. The squirrel's mother helped her to find food for the goats.

True

5. The leopard believed the squirrel's story about the branding iron.

False. The leopard did not believe the squirrel's story about the branding iron.

6. The squirrel called her mother to come down from the tree and the leopard killed her.

False. The leopard called the squirrel's mother down from the tree, and then he killed her.

7. The squirrel had red eyes because she had put medicine in them.

False. The squirrel had red eyes because she had cried all day.

8. "You won't like the medicine," the squirrel said to the leopard.

True

9. The squirrel blinded the leopard by putting hot stones on his eyes.

True

10. "My mother will bring back your eyes," the squirrel said to the leopard.

False. The squirrel said, "I'll give you back your eyes when you bring back my mother."

B. Answers with "because"

1/c. The goats ate well when they went out with the squirrel because **her mother threw leaves down from the trees.**

2/d. The leopard was angry with the squirrel because **the squirrel was not telling the truth.**

3/b. The leopard killed the squirrel's mother because **he wanted to punish the squirrel.**

4/f. The squirrel began to cry because **her mother was dead.**

5/a. The leopard wanted the medicine because **he wanted to become big and strong.**

6/e. The squirrel put hot stones in the leopard's eyes because **she wanted to punish the leopard.**

The Little Sister

A Story from Borena



Before you read the story

- Why do some parents love their sons more than their daughters?
- Do you have brothers and sisters?
- Do you look after each other?

Now read the story

Once there was a soldier. He had a good wife and a fine son, but he wanted many more sons. One day his wife became pregnant and the soldier was very happy.

"The baby will be a boy," he said. "I'm sure it will be a boy."

He called his son and said to him, "Listen, my boy. A war has started in our country. I'm a soldier and I must go and fight. I will be far away and you will be the only man in the house. You must take care of your mother. Soon her baby will come. I want a boy. I don't want a girl. If it's a girl, you must kill her. Then you must come and find me, and show me her blood. But if it's a boy, kill the black sheep and bring its blood to me."

The boy was unhappy.

"Father," he said. "I can't kill my own sister."

"You must be a man now," his father answered. "Remember, I only want a son."

The soldier said goodbye to his family and went away to the war.

A few months later, the baby was born. It was a girl. Her brother looked at her. She was small and very sweet. She opened her eyes and smiled at him. He picked her up and held her in his arms.

"Little sister," he said quietly. "I'll never hurt you. I'll look after you. I promise."

He went outside and killed the black sheep. Then he took its blood and said to his mother, "Mother, I must go and find my father. I must tell him the news."

"No," his mother cried. "Your father wanted a son. He didn't want a daughter."

"Don't worry," the boy answered. "I won't tell him the truth."

So the boy went to find his father. He travelled a long way, through the valleys and over the mountains. At last he found his father.

"Father," he said. "You have another son. I have killed the black sheep. Here is its blood."

His father was very happy.

"This is wonderful news," he said. "Stay here with me. We'll celebrate together."

The boy looked at his father. He did not smile.

"No, Father," he said. "I must go back to my mother."

The little girl grew quickly. She was a beautiful child. Her brother loved her. He made her little presents. He told her stories and sang to her.

After a long time, the war ended.

"Your husband is coming home," everyone said to the boy's mother. "It's wonderful news. Now you will be happy."

The boy was very worried. He ran to find his sister.

"Our father's coming home," he said. "When he comes, don't run up to him. Don't call him Daddy. Don't try to kiss him. Be like the other children in the village. Then he won't know that you are his daughter."

The soldier came home. Everyone ran out to greet him. Only the boy waited at the house.

"Are you well, Father?" he said, but again he did not smile.

That night, the boy woke his sister and went outside.

"What are you doing?" she asked. "Where are you going?"

"Be quiet," he said. "Our father must not hear us."

He untied his father's mule and lifted his sister on to its back. Quietly, they went away. They travelled all night and all the next day and at last they came to a big forest.

"We'll stay here," the boy said. "Our father will never find us here."

The boy and his sister lived in the forest for many years. The little girl grew into a beautiful young woman, and the boy grew into a fine young man. Their life was difficult and dangerous. There were many ogres in the forest. The brother was brave and strong. He killed some of the ogres, but he could not kill them all.

One day, a clever young ogre was walking past the house. He saw the girl, and he fell in love with her.

"I want her," he thought. "I'm going to marry her."

Every morning he watched her house. Every morning, the young man went out to work in the fields. And every morning the ogre waited. When the girl was alone, he went to the house.

"You're so beautiful," he said to the girl. "Marry me. I'm very rich. You will have the best clothes and the best food and a big, beautiful home. Come away with me now. We can be married today."

"I can't marry you today," the girl said. "First we must ask my brother."

"But your brother hates ogres," the ogre said. "He has killed many of us. He will never let me marry you."

The girl looked at him. She liked him. He was handsome and rich.

"What can we do?" she said.

"We must kill your brother," said the ogre. "Then we can be happy."

"I can't kill my own brother," said the girl. "I love you, but I can't kill my brother."

The ogre was angry.

"Who do you love most?" he said. "Me, or your brother?"

"I don't know, I don't know," said the girl.

Every day, the ogre came, and every day he asked the same question. "Who do you love most? Me or your brother?"

One day, the ogre said, "I can't wait any longer. Marry me, or I'll go away. I'll never see you again."

"All right," said the girl. "I'll marry you."

The ogre was very pleased.

"Now we will be happy," he said.

"But how can we persuade my brother?" asked the girl.

"You must lie down on your bed," said the ogre. "Tell your brother that you're sick. Tell him that only my food can make you better. He'll come and look for me. I'll meet him, and give him some of my food for you."

"And after that what will we do?" asked the girl.

"You'll see," the ogre said.

So the girl lay down on her bed. Soon her brother came home.

"Sister, what's the matter?" he said. "Are you sick?"

"Yes," the girl said. "I'm very, very sick. Only one thing can make the better."

"What's that?" asked her brother. "Tell me, and I'll get it for you."

"I need food from the young ogre," said the girl. "Get some for me quickly, or I'll die."

So the brother ran out to look for the young ogre. He ran fast. On the road he met an old ogre.

"Where are you going?" asked the old ogre.

"My sister is sick," said the young man. "She wants the young ogre's food. Only that will make her better, she says."

The old ogre shook his head.

"You're in terrible danger," he said. "There is magic in the food of ogres. When your sister eats the food, she will change. Believe me, I know my people."

"And I know my sister," said the young man. "She will never hurt me."

"You won't listen to me," said the old ogre. "But I'll help you. The young ogre and your sister will try to kill you. Before they kill you, you must say to them, 'Kill me if you like. But then put my body on the back of my mule. Put my rifle on the mule and send it out into the barley field.'"

Then the old ogre went away, and the young man ran on. Soon he met the young ogre.

"My sister is sick," he said. "'Bring me the young ogre's food,' she said. 'Only that will cure me.'"

The young ogre smiled.

"I'll bring her some at once," he said.

He ran fast to the brother's house, and gave the girl some of his food. She ate it and she changed. Now she was ready to kill her brother.

Her brother came into the house. His sister was standing up.

"Sister!" he said. "You're better!"

"Yes," she said. "The ogre's food is a wonderful medicine. I'm quite better now. I feel strong and very happy. Brother, when I was sick, I had a dream. I remembered our father's house. We used to play a game. First I tied you to the post of

the house, and then you tied me to the post of the house. Do you remember that game?"

Her brother smiled.

"Oh yes," he said. "I remember that game."

"Let's play it now," said the girl. "Tie me to the post."

So the young man tied his sister to the post of the house. They both laughed.

"Untie me now," said the girl. "And I'll tie you."

So the young man untied his sister from the post of the house, and she tied him to it.

Then she went to the door of the house, and called out, "Master, he's ready. Come now and kill him."

The ogre ran into the house. He had a knife in his hand.

"Stop! Wait!" said the young man. "You're going to kill me. I know that. But promise me one thing. Take my body, and put it on my mule. Put my rifle on the mule and send it out into the barley field."

"All right, I promise," said the ogre. "You'll be dead. You can't hurt us then."

So the ogre killed the young man with his knife and cut him in many places. He and the girl untied the body and put it on the young man's mule. They put his rifle on the mule and they sent it out into the barley field.



The old ogre was waiting in the field. He took the mule to his house and lifted the young man's body off it. He breathed on the body. Life came back into it, and the young man stood up.

The old ogre gave him his rifle and said, "You're alive again. I've saved your life."

The young man thanked the ogre. He ran to his house. He killed the young ogre with his rifle, then he took his sister, and put her on the mule. He drove the mule back to his parents' house.

"Look at your daughter," he said to them. "I saved her life but she killed me."

"This is a terrible story," everyone said. "It shows us one thing. You can be good and kind to people, but they will not always be good and kind to you."

[[Click here to listen to the story](#)]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

This is a long story, with different parts, or "scenes".

These sentences retell the story. Find the right words to fill the gaps.

Scene 1

"If the new baby is a girl, you must her," the soldier told his son.
But when his little was born, the boy could not hurt her.
He said to his father, "You have another"

Scene 2

The boy was worried when the ended and the soldier came home.
"Don't run up and greet our", he said to his sister.
In the night, he put the little girl on a and took her away.

Scene 3

They lived in a big where the girl grew into a beautiful young woman.
There were many in the forest.
A rich young ogre asked the little sister to him.
He wanted her to her brother.

Scene 4

The girl ate some of the ogre's food, and she
She helped the young ogre to her brother.
An old ogre breathed on the body and came back into it.
The girl's brother killed the ogre.
He took his sister back to his house.

B. When did it happen?

Choose the right ending for these sentences from the list below.

1. The soldier went away to fight.....
2. The war ended.....
3. The boy did not go outside, but he waited in the house
4. The boy and girl lived in the forest
5. The girl changed.....
6. The girl tied her brother to the post.....
7. The ogre made a promise.....
8. The boy took his sister to their parents' house.....

- a)before he killed the boy.
- b)when his father came home.
- c)after a long time.
- d)before she called the ogre.
- e)after she ate the ogre's food.
- f)a few months before his daughter was born.
- g)after he killed the ogre.
- h)for many years.

C. What do you think?

There are many ideas and meanings in this story. Some people will find one meaning. Others will see different meanings.

Which of these meanings is the most true for you? There are no right or wrong answers. Just say what YOU think.

This story shows that a father who does not love his daughters will bring trouble to his family.

The story is about the love between brothers and sisters.

The story shows that a bad person, like the young ogre, can turn someone against their own family.

The story shows that a good person, like the brother, will win in the end.

The story shows that when a person does something bad, they are punished.

Now think of a better title for the story.

D. Acting

This story will make a good play. Put the scenes together, and act them with your friends.

E. More stories to enjoy

If you enjoyed this story, there are others in this collection that you might like. Click on the links below.

[The Demon's Daughter]

[The Hyena Woman]

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

A. How much did you understand?

Scene 1

"If the new baby is a girl, you must **kill** her," the soldier told his son.
But when his little **sister** was born, the boy could not hurt her.
He said to his father, "You have another **son**."

Scene 2

The boy was worried when the **war** ended and the soldier came home.
"Don't run up and greet our **father**," he said to his sister.
In the night, he put the little girl on a **mule** and took her away.

Scene 3

They lived in a big **forest** where the girl grew into a beautiful young woman.
There were many **ogres** in the forest.
A rich young ogre asked the little sister **marry** him.
He wanted her to **kill** her brother.

Scene 4

The girl ate some of the ogre's food, and she **changed**.
She helped the young ogre to **kill** her brother.
An old ogre breathed on the body and **life** came back into it.
The girl's brother killed the **young** ogre.
He took his sister back to his **parents'** house.

B. When did it happen?

1/f. The soldier went away to fight **a few months before his daughter was born**.

2/c. The war ended **after a long time**.

3/b. The boy did not go outside, but he waited in the house **when his father came home**.

4/h. The boy and girl lived in the forest **for many years**.

5/e. The girl changed **after she ate the ogre's food**.

6/d. The girl tied her brother to the post **before she called the ogre**.

7/a. The ogre made a promise **before he killed the boy**.

8/g. The boy took his sister to their parents' house **after he killed the ogre**.

The Rat King's Son

A Story from Wollega



Before you read the story

- Who is a great person?
- Why are they great?
- Which is the greatest of these things:
The wind? A mountain? A bushrat? The fog?
- Why do you think so?

Now read the story

The Rat King was very proud.

"The rats are the most wonderful animals in the world," he said.

All the other rats agreed with him.

"You're right," they all said. "We are the most wonderful animals in the world."

"And I'm the most wonderful king in the world," said the Rat King.

"It's true, it's true," said all the other rats. "You are the most wonderful king in the world."

"And my son is the most wonderful prince in the world," said the Rat King.

"We agree, we agree!" said all the other rats. "Your son is the most wonderful prince in the world."

"We must find a wife for my son," the Rat King said to his elders. "But how? None of the other animals are as wonderful as the rats. And my son must marry the best girl in the world. Where can we find her?"

The rats thought for a long time. Then one of the elders said, "There is one person who is greater than us."

"Who is that?" asked the Rat King angrily.

"Our Creator," the elder said.

"You're right," the Rat King said. "Our Creator is even greater than us. Go and ask the Creator to give his daughter to my son."

So the elders of the rats went up to the sky to see their Creator.

"Please, sir," they said. "Our prince, the son of the Rat King, is the most wonderful animal in the world. We are looking for a wife for him. Will you give us your daughter?"

The Creator smiled.

"Is your prince really the most wonderful animal in the world?" said the Creator. "Then he's too good for my daughter. He must marry someone greater than her."

"Who is better than the Creator?" asked the rats.

"The fog is greater than me," said the Creator. "He comes into the sky and covers me. I can't escape from him. I can't send him away. Ask the fog for his daughter."

So the elders went back to their king.

"The Creator is always right," the Rat King said. "The fog is greater than him. Go and ask the fog for his daughter."

So the elders went to find the fog.

"Sir," they said. "Our prince is the greatest animal in the world, and he wants to marry your daughter."

"Tell me about him," said the fog.

"He's clever," said the elders, "and handsome, and..."

"Stop!" said the fog. "He's too good for my daughter. He must marry someone greater than me."

"Who is greater than the fog?" the elders asked.

"The wind is greater than me," said the fog. "He blows me away. I can't stand against the wind. Ask him for his daughter."

The elders went back to the Rat King.

"The fog is right," said the Rat King. "The wind is greater than him. Go and ask the wind for his daughter."

So the elders went to find the wind.

"Great wind," they said. "We come from the Rat King. He is the greatest king in the world and he wants your daughter to marry his son."

"Is he really the greatest king in the world?" said the wind. "He's too good for me. Your prince must find someone greater."

"Who is greater than the wind?" the elders asked.

"The mountain is greater than me," answered the wind. "I push against him and blow on him, but he never moves. Go and ask the mountain for his daughter."

The elders went back to their king.

"Yes, yes!" he cried. "The wind is right. Go and speak to the mountain."

So the elders went and spoke to the mountain.

"Is your prince really so great and wonderful?" said the mountain. "Then he is too good for my daughter. He must marry someone better than her."

"Who? Who?" asked the elders.

"The bushrat is greater than me," the mountain said. "He makes holes inside me and I can't stop him."

"And the bushrat is my cousin. His daughter will be a very good wife for my son," said the Rat King.

So the Rat Prince married the bushrat's daughter, and they lived happily for many years.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Who said these sentences?

1. "And I'm the most wonderful king in the world."
2. "And my son must marry the best girl in the world."
3. "There is one person who is greater than us."
4. "You're right. Our Creator is even greater than us."
5. "Is your prince really the most wonderful animal in the world? Then he's too good for my daughter."
6. "The fog is greater than me. He comes into the sky and covers me."
7. "The wind is greater than me. He blows me away."
8. "The mountain is greater than me. I push against him and blow on him, but he never moves."
9. "The bushrat is greater than me. He makes holes inside me and I can't stop him."
10. "And the bushrat is my cousin. His daughter will be a very good wife for my son."

B. Speech marks

Did you notice how the speech marks (" ") are used? They show the reader that the words are spoken by someone. For example, "I like this story," Meseret said to her brother.

Put speech marks in the right places in these sentences.

1. We must find a wife for my son, the Rat King said to his elders.
2. Our Creator is greater than us, one of the elders said.
3. Sir, said the elders. Our prince is the greatest animal in the world.
4. Stop! said the fog. He's too good for my daughter.
5. Great wind, said the elders. We come from the Rat King.

C. Ending sentences.

Make up your own endings to these sentences. There are no right answers! Talk about your ideas with your friends.

1. Water is greater than stone because...
2. A knife is greater than meat, because...
3. Scissors are greater than paper, because...

D. Now turn the story into a play, and act it with your friends. Try to move like the characters and speak like them.



[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

1. "And I'm the most wonderful king in the world," **said the Rat King.**
2. "And my son must marry the best girl in the world," **said the Rat King.**
3. "There is one person who is greater than us," **said one of the elders.**
4. "You're right. Our Creator is even greater than us," **said the Rat King.**
5. "Is your prince really the most wonderful animal in the world? Then he's too good for my daughter," **said the Creator.**
6. "The fog is greater than me. He comes into the sky and covers me," **said the Creator.**
7. "The wind is greater than me. He blows me away," **said the fog.**
8. "The mountain is greater than me. I push against him and blow on him, but he never moves," **said the wind.**
9. "The bushrat is greater than me. He makes holes inside me and I can't stop him," **said the mountain.**
10. "And the bushrat is my cousin. His daughter will be a very good wife for my son," **said the Rat King.**

B. Speech marks

1. "We must find a wife for my son," the Rat King said to his elders.
2. "Our Creator is greater than us," one of the elders said.
3. "Sir," said the elders. "Our prince is the greatest animal in the world."
4. "Stop!" said the fog. "He's too good for my daughter."
5. "Great wind," said the elders. "We come from the Rat King."

The Mother-in-law

A Story from Borena



Before you read the story

- How do you make decisions?
- What does it mean to 'change your mind'?
- Have you ever changed your mind? Have you decided to do something, and then done something else?

Now read the story

A young man once lived with his mother. She cooked his food and cleaned his house and looked after him. But one day, the man got married. His wife came to live with him and his mother.

At first, all went well, but then the two women began to quarrel. The old woman began to hate her daughter-in-law, and the young woman began to hate her mother-in-law.

One day, the husband came home late from the fields.

"Wife," he said. "I'm tired. Bring me some water. I want to wash myself."

His wife didn't answer.

The husband called out again.

"Wife!" he cried. "I'm hungry. Where's my dinner?"

Again his wife refused to answer.

The man was angry.

"What's the matter with you?" he said. "Why don't you answer me?"

His wife began to cry.

"It's your mother," she said. "She hates me. She quarrels with me all the time. 'You stupid, lazy girl,' she says. 'Why did my son marry you?' I can't live with her any longer."

The man looked at his wife. She was beautiful and he loved her.

"Please, my darling," he said. "Try to live happily with her. She's an old woman. She won't be with us for ever. Don't talk about it now. Bring me my dinner."

"Dinner?" said his wife. "There is no dinner! I can't cook when that old woman is in the house. 'Do this, do that, that's wrong, that's bad,' she says to me all the time."

"But what can I do?" the man said. "She's my mother. This is her home. I can't send her away."

"You must choose," said his wife. "You can live with me, or you can live with her. You can't have both of us."

That night, the man went to bed hungry. He lay down but he couldn't sleep.

"What can I do?" he thought. "How can I choose between my wife and my mother? My mother loves me. When I was a child, she fed me and looked after me. But my wife is young and beautiful. I love her. I can't live without her."

The next morning, his wife said to him, "Well, husband? Have you chosen? Do you want your mother, or do you want me?"

"I want both of you!" said the man.

"You can't have both of us," said his wife. "Kill your mother. She's an old woman. She'll die soon. But I am young. We love each other. We can have many happy years together."

"Kill my mother?" the man said. "What are you saying? How can I kill my own mother?"

The man went off to work in the fields. All day he thought about his wife and his mother.

"My wife is right," he thought at last. "My mother is old. Her life is not valuable now. I will take her up the mountain and throw her over the cliff. Then my wife and I will be alone together and we'll be happy."

He went home.

"Well?" said his wife. "Have you chosen?"

"Yes," answered her husband. "I have chosen you. Tomorrow I will take my mother up the mountain and throw her over the cliff. Now bring me water. I'm tired. I want to wash myself."

His wife ran to fetch the water. She came back quickly.

"Now," said the man. "Bring me my dinner. I'm hungry."

"Yes, yes," said his wife. "I have cooked all your favourite dishes. When your mother is dead, I will make them for you every day."

The next day, the man got up early and woke his mother.

"Mother," he said. "You and I are going on a journey today. I'll take you up the mountain. It's very cool up there. You will like it very much."

His mother looked at him. She was surprised.

"I'm old," she said. "I can't walk up the mountain."

"Then I'll carry you," said her son.

He picked her up and began to carry her up the mountain. At first his mother was happy.

"This is very kind of you, my son," she said. "I haven't been here for many years. It's nice to see the old places again."

Her son said nothing. Soon the old woman stopped talking.

The mountain was very high and the road was steep. The path went up and up. Soon the man and his mother were standing at the top of a cliff.

"My son," said the old woman quietly. "I know what you want to do. I understand everything. But please be careful. Throw me over the cliff, but don't fall over yourself. Look, there is a tree. When you push me, hold a branch of the tree. Then you will be safe."

The man looked at her. He was very surprised.

"Mother," he said. "You know what I want to do. You understand everything. But you still love me! You're still worried about me, and you don't want me to die."

She smiled sadly at him.

"Ah my dear," she said. "Only a mother knows love. One day you'll have a child of your own. Then you'll understand. Then you'll really love another person."

The man put his mother down and sat down beside her. He put his head in his hands and began to think.

"Does my wife love me as much as this?" he thought. "No, she doesn't. How good my mother is! How kind she is! I wanted to kill her, but she still loves me."

Then he thought about his wife.

"She's a wicked woman," he thought. "'Kill your own mother!' she said. I loved her once, but I don't love her now. I have chosen. I will keep my mother and send my wife away."

So the man carried his mother down from the mountain and took her home. And he sent his wife away, and lived happily with his mother for many, many years.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

There are four parts to this story. Put these sentences from Part One into the right order.

Part One

1. "You must choose. You can live with me, or you can live with her."
2. "Wife! I'm hungry. Where's my dinner?"
3. "It's your mother. She hates me. She quarrels with me all the time."
4. "What's the matter with you? Why don't you answer me?"

Part Two

Put these sentences from Part Two into the right order.

1. "I want both of you!"
2. "What are you saying? How can I kill my own mother?"
3. "Well, husband? Have you chosen? Do you want your mother, or do you want me?"

Part Three

Put these sentences from Part Three into the right order.

1. "I have cooked all your favourite dishes. When your mother is dead, I will make them for you every day."
2. All day, he thought about his wife and his mother.
3. "I have chosen you. Tomorrow I will take my mother up the mountain and throw her over the cliff."

Part Four

Put these sentences from Part Four into the right order.

1. "How good my mother is!"
2. "Ah, my dear. Only a mother knows love."
3. Soon the man and his mother were standing at the top of a cliff.
4. "But please be careful. Throw me over the cliff, but don't fall over yourself."

B. What were they feeling?

What were the characters in the story feeling? Find the right words to finish these sentences.

1. One day the man came home late from the fields. He was feeling
2. The man was hungry, but his wife didn't bring him any dinner. He was feeling.....
3. When the man began to carry his mother up the mountain, she was feeling
4. "Mother, you know what I want to do," said the man. He was feeling

C. What do you think?

Which person did you like best in the story?

Is it easy for a daughter-in-law and mother-in-law to live together?

Did the man make the right decision?

The man's mother said, "Only a mother knows love." Do you agree?

D. Acting

Now put the four scenes of the story together and act them like a play.

Try to act like the characters in the story.



[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

A. How much did you understand?

Scene 1

The right order of these sentences is 2, 4, 3, 1

"Wife! I'm hungry. Where's my dinner?"

"What's the matter with you? Why don't you answer me?"

"It's your mother. She hates me. She quarrels with me all the time."

"You must choose. You can live with me, or you can live with her."

Scene 2

The right order of these sentences is 3, 2, 1

"Well, husband? Have you chosen? Do you want your mother, or do you want me?"

"I want both of you!"

"What are you saying? How can I kill my own mother?"

Scene 3

The right order of these sentences is 2, 3, 1

All day, he thought about his wife and his mother.

"I have chosen you. Tomorrow I will take my mother up the mountain and throw her from the cliff."

"I have cooked all your favourite dishes. When your mother is dead, I will make them for you every day."

Scene 4

The right order of these sentences is 3, 4, 2, 1

Soon the man and his mother were standing at the top of a cliff.

"But please be careful. Throw me over the cliff, but don't fall over yourself."

"Ah, my dear. Only a mother knows love."

"How good my mother is!"

B. What were they feeling?

1. One day the man came home late from the fields. He was feeling **tired**.
2. The man was hungry, but his wife didn't bring him any dinner. He was feeling **angry**.
3. When the man began to carry his mother up the mountain, she was feeling **happy**.
4. "Mother, you know what I want to do," said the man. He was feeling **surprised**.

The Grateful Animals

A Story from Borena



Before you read the story

- Have you ever made a promise? Did you keep it?
- Have you ever broken a promise? Why?
- Is it wrong to break a promise?

Now read the story

Once upon a time, a man, a lion, a donkey, a puff-adder, an eagle and a dog were going to war together. They travelled all day until at last the sun went down.

"Where are we going to sleep?" asked the donkey.

"Look," said the puff-adder. "There's a hut, and smoke is coming out of it. We can sleep there."

So they went to the hut and called out to the people inside.

A man and his wife came out.

"Please come in," they said to the travellers. "You are welcome to sleep here. But we are very poor and we have no food to give you."

"But you have a cow," the lion said. "We saw it outside your house."

"It's the only thing we have," the man said. "If we kill it, we'll have nothing."

"We'll reward you," the man and the animals said. "Please kill it for us." "If you give me its blood," said the lion, "I'll repay you one day."

"I want the bones," said the dog, "and one day I'll reward you too."

"Let me have the milk," the man said. "I'll give you something wonderful one day."

"Give me the fat," said the puff-adder, "and I promise you, you won't be sorry."

"And I," said the eagle, "I want the small pieces of meat under the skin. Give them to me, and I'll reward you."

"I don't want meat," said the donkey. "But give me some grass from your roof. You'll never regret it."

So the man and his wife killed their cow. They gave the blood to the lion, the bones to the dog, the milk to the man, the fat to the puff-adder and the small pieces under the skin to the eagle. And they gave the donkey grass from the roof of the hut.

The travellers slept well that night, and the next morning they went away.

Many weeks passed. Then, one day, the man and his wife heard a loud noise near their hut. The lion was roaring. They went outside.

The lion wasn't there, but a big elephant tusk was lying on the ground.

"This is wonderful!" the woman said. "Husband, look at this tusk. It's very valuable."

"Take it into the house," her husband said. "We must be careful. Perhaps thieves will come and take it."

Just then, a dog barked.

The man and the woman looked behind them. The dog was lying beside the door of the house.

"Don't worry," he said. "I'll keep the thieves away. You helped me once and now I'll help you."

Now the man had a wicked brother. He was rich, but he was cruel and everyone hated him. He heard about the elephant tusk.

"I want that tusk," he thought. "I'll kill my brother and take it from him."

Late at night, when it was dark, he went to his brother's house. But the puff-adder was lying on the path, waiting for him. It bit the wicked brother and he died.

In that country, a dead man's brother takes his wealth. Now the wicked brother's cows and sheep belonged to the man and his wife.

"The lion, the dog and the puff-adder have repaid us well," the man said to his wife. "What will the eagle, the donkey and the man do?"

One day, the eagle was flying high in the sky. He looked down and saw a crowd of elders. They were walking together along the road and something bright was shining in their hands.

"They have money and jewels," thought the eagle. "They are taking presents from a wife to her husband, or from a husband to his wife, to end a quarrel. But they will forgive each other anyway."

He flew down and took the gifts out of the elders' hands. Then he dropped them outside the hut of the man and his wife.

On the same day, the donkey was in a forest not far away. He had a heavy bag on his back. It was full of Maria Teresa dollars.

The donkey's master was beating him.

"Go faster, you stupid, lazy animal!" he shouted. "Or I'll kill you!"

The donkey wanted to punish his cruel master. He ran away, and came to the hut of the man and his wife.

"Take the dollars," he said. "They're yours."

The old man and his wife were rich now.

"Our friends the animals have been very good to us," the man said. "I'm glad we killed our cow for them."

"And the man has not repaid us yet," his wife said. "The animals have done many things for us, but a man will certainly do more."

They waited and waited. Weeks passed, then months and years, but the man never came back. The animals kept their promises, but the man forgot his.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Which man or animal made each promise?

How did they keep their promises?

1. "I want the bones and one day, I'll reward you too."
2. "If you give me its blood, I'll repay you one day."
3. "But give me some grass from your roof. You'll never regret it."
4. "And I want the small pieces of meat under the skin. Give them to me and I'll reward you."
5. "Give me the fat and I promise you, you won't be sorry."
6. "Let me have the milk. I'll give you something wonderful one day."

B. Where? When? Who?

1. Where were the man, the lion, the donkey, the puff-adder, the eagle and the dog going?
2. Who came out of the hut?
3. Where did the man and his wife find the elephant tusk?
4. Who wanted to steal the elephant tusk?
5. When did the man's wicked brother go out to kill him?
6. When did the man come back to repay the man and his wife?

C. What do you think?

Were the man and his wife right to kill their cow to feed the travellers?

Did the animals repay the man and his wife well?

What do you think of the man who never came back?

D. Now you retell the story.

Work with your friends. Choose the animals you want to be, and act the story like a play.

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

A. How much did you understand?

1. "I want the bones and one day, I'll reward you too."

The dog

He lay beside the door of the man and woman's house and kept thieves away.

2. "If you give me its blood, I'll repay you one day."

The lion

He brought them an elephant tusk.

3. "But give me some grass from your roof. You'll never regret it."

The donkey.

He brought them a bag of Maria Teresa dollars.

4. "And I want the small pieces of meat under the skin. Give them to me and I'll reward you."

The eagle

He took money and jewels from the elders and dropped them outside the man and woman's hut.

5. "Give me the fat and I promise you, you won't be sorry."

The puff adder

He bit the man's wicked brother.

6. "Let me have the milk. I'll give you something wonderful one day."

The man.

He forgot his promise and never repaid the man and the woman.

B. Where? When? Who?

1. Where were the man, the lion, the donkey, the puff-adder, the eagle and the dog going?

They were going to war.

2. Who came out of the hut?

A man and his wife came out.

3. Where did the man and his wife find the elephant tusk?

On the ground outside their house

4. Who wanted to steal the elephant tusk?

The man's brother

5. When did the man's wicked brother go out to kill him?

Late at night

6. When did the man come back to repay the man and his wife?

Never

The Jackal and the Rabbit

A Story from Bale



Before you read the story

What's fair, and what's unfair?

- Has anyone been unfair to you?
- Is it important to be fair? Why?

Now read the story

Once upon a time there was a hungry jackal. He tried to catch a bushrat, but the bushrat ran away. He tried to chase a squirrel, but the squirrel ran up a tree. Then the jackal saw a fat little mouse.

"He looks good to eat," he thought.

The mouse saw the jackal. It ran under a big rock, and jumped into its hole.

"I must dig it out of its hole," thought the jackal.

He ran under the big rock too, and began to dig. But the jackal dug too far and he dug too deep. The rock fell down on him. The jackal's paw was under it and he couldn't pull it out.

"I'm trapped!" shouted the jackal. "Help! Help!"

A rabbit heard him and ran up to him.

"What happened to you?" she asked.

"I was hunting a mouse," answered the jackal, "and this rock fell on my paw. Oh please, dear, kind rabbit, please help me!"

"Hm," said the rabbit. "I'd like to help you, but I'm small and weak and this rock is very big. It will be hard work for me. What will you give me if I help you?"

"Oh," cried the jackal, "I'll make a wonderful dinner for you. I'll give you all your favourite dishes. You'll eat the best food in the world."

"All right," said the rabbit. "I'll try to help you."

She pushed the rock. It didn't move. She pushed again and again and again. At last the rock rolled off the jackal's paw.

The rabbit smiled.

"Now I want my reward," she said.

"What reward?" said the jackal. "I can't give you a reward. I'm very hungry, and you are a nice fat little rabbit. I'm going to eat you."

"What?" said the rabbit. "But I helped you! You promised to reward me! How can you eat me now?"

"I'm a jackal and you're a rabbit," answered the jackal. "Jackals always eat rabbits. Don't argue with me."

"This isn't fair," the rabbit said. "We must find the elders and ask their advice."

So the jackal and the rabbit went to look for the elders. At last they found an old man.

"Please help us," the rabbit said. "This jackal wants to eat me. But I saved his life. I found him under a rock. The rock was on his paw and he couldn't escape. He promised to give me a wonderful dinner. So I pushed the rock off his paw. At once he forgot his promise and now he's going to eat me."

"That's not right," the old man said. "Jackal, you are ungrateful. Let the rabbit go."

The jackal opened his mouth. He showed the old man his long, sharp teeth.

"No," he said. "I won't let her go. Don't try to stop me, old man, or I'll eat you too."

The old man looked frightened.

"Please don't eat me," he said. "Perhaps I was wrong. Perhaps you are right after all. I can't decide yet. First I must see the rock. I must understand everything. What happened exactly?"

"Oh, that's easy," the jackal said. "Come with me. I'll show you."

So the old man went back to the rock with the jackal and the rabbit.

"What were you doing?" he asked the jackal.

"I was hunting a mouse," the jackal answered. "It ran into its hole, so I was digging it out. The rock fell on to my paw."

"Which rock?" said the old man.

"This one," answered the jackal.

"And where were you?" asked the old man.

"I was here," the jackal said, and he lay down on the ground.

The old man looked at the rabbit.

"You're only a little rabbit," he said. "You're small and weak. You couldn't move that big rock. I don't believe it."

"But I did! I did!" cried the rabbit.

"Show me then," the old man said.

So the rabbit pushed and pushed and the rock fell back on to the jackal's paw.

"Did you find the jackal like this?" asked the old man.

The rabbit nodded.

"Yes," she said.

"Did the rabbit find you like this?" the old man asked the jackal.

The jackal nodded.

"Yes," he said.

"Good," said the old man. "Then it's all fair now. Run away rabbit. Go home. I'm going home too."

And so the old man and the rabbit went away, and left the ungrateful jackal under the rock.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

These sentences retell the story. Find the right words in the story to fill the gaps.

1. The mouse saw the jackal and ran underneath a big rock into its
2. The jackal began to dig and a rock fell on his
3. A rabbit pushed the rock, and it off the jackal's paw.
4. The rabbit asked for her
5. But the jackal said, "I'm going to you."
6. At last they found an old man and asked for his
7. The old man wanted to see the rock so that he could
8. "How did you that big rock?" the old man asked the rabbit.
9. The rabbit pushed the rock and it fell back onto the jackal's
10. The man and the rabbit away, and left behind the ungrateful jackal.

B. Into, off, under, up, on

Choose the right word from the list below to fill the gaps in these sentences.

1. The squirrel ran a tree.
2. The mouse ran a big rock.
3. The mouse ran its hole.
4. The rock fell the jackal's paw.
5. When the rabbit pushed the rock, it rolled the jackal's paw.

into, off, under, up, on

C. What do you think?

Was the rabbit right to help the jackal?

Was the jackal fair to the rabbit?

Did the old man give good advice?

Do you think that the jackal learned to be fair in future?



[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

1. The mouse saw the jackal and ran underneath a big rock into its **hole**.
2. The jackal began to dig and a rock fell on his **paw**.
3. A rabbit pushed the rock, and it **rolled** off the jackal's paw.
4. The rabbit asked for her **reward**.
5. But the jackal said, "I'm going to **eat** you."
6. At last they found an old man and asked for his **advice**.
7. The old man wanted to see the rock so that he could **understand**.
8. "How did you **move/push** that big rock?" the old man asked the rabbit.
9. The rabbit pushed the rock and it fell back onto the jackal's **paw**.
10. The man and the rabbit **went** away, and left behind the ungrateful jackal.

B. Into, off, under, up, on

1. The squirrel ran **up** a tree.
2. The mouse ran **under** a big rock.
3. The mouse ran **into** its hole.
4. The rock fell **on** the jackal's paw.
5. When the rabbit pushed the rock, it rolled **off** the jackal's paw.

The Baboon Chief

A Story from Bale



Before you read the story

- Why do some people bully others?
- What do bullies do to younger or weaker people?
- How do you stop people being bullies?

Now read the story

Once there was a troop of baboons. They lived peacefully together. They went out every day to look for food and slept at night on some big rocks.

But one day, the biggest baboon decided to become their chief. He was a big, dangerous animal.

"You must all obey me!" he said in a loud voice. "I'm the cleverest. I'm the strongest. I'm the greatest of you all!"

Some of the other baboons tried to fight the baboon chief but they were not strong enough or clever enough. The chief was too strong for them. He pulled their tails. He beat them and bit them. Soon all the baboons obeyed him. They were frightened of him.

The baboon chief was happy now.

"Who is the most important baboon around here?" he asked.

"You are, sir. You are," all the others answered.

The baboon chief was the strongest baboon, but he was not the only big one. There were some other big baboons in the troop.

"Sir," one old baboon said to him. "We all want to obey you. We all want to follow you, but we don't always recognise you. It's easy for us to follow the wrong baboon. Please wear something on your head. Then we will always know that you are our great and wonderful chief."

"You stupid animals," the baboon chief said. "Don't you know your own leader?"

Another old baboon spoke.

"We are not clever like you, sir," he said. "And anyway, you are our king. A king wears a crown on his head. Look, we've found this beautiful scarf. Please wear it for us."

"Hm. Ah. Oh," said the baboon chief.

He looked at the faces of his troop. They were all watching him. They were afraid.

"All right," he said. "I'll wear your scarf. But listen, all of you. I'm not happy with you. I'm not happy at all. You're not good baboons. You don't come quickly when I call. You don't bring me the best food. You don't follow me. But things are going to change! Do you want me to fight you? Do you want me to pull your tails and bite you and beat you? Then you must obey me! When I do something, you must do it too. When I say something, you must say it too! Do you understand?"

The other baboons looked at him. His teeth were long and sharp. He was very clever and strong. They were frightened of him.

"Yes sir!" they all shouted. "We will obey you."

"Good," said the chief. "Then tie the scarf round my head."

So the baboons tied the scarf round the chief's head. He stood up and began to walk away. All the baboons followed him. He stopped walking and sat down. All the baboons sat down too. He ran up into a tree. All the baboons ran up into the tree too. He went to sleep. All the baboons went to sleep too.

After a while, the baboon chief woke up. He had a headache. The scarf on his head was tight.

He sat up and put his head in his hands. The other baboons all sat up and put their heads in their hands too.

"Oh! Oh!" the baboon chief said. "This scarf's too tight. It hurts."

"Oh! Oh!" all the other baboons said. "This scarf's too tight. It hurts."

"Take it off! Take it off!" shouted the baboon chief.

"Take it off! Take it off!" shouted the other baboons.

"It's killing me! Help me!" cried the baboon chief.

"It's killing me! Help me!" cried the other baboons.

The baboon chief jumped up. He began to run along the top of the rocks. He was shouting and crying. All the other baboons followed him. They were shouting and crying too.

Then the baboon chief fell off the rocks on to the ground far below. The other baboons jumped down on top of him. And so the baboon chief died.

That was the end of a great tyrant.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

These sentences retell the story. Which ones are true, and which ones are false?

1. The baboons obeyed the chief because he was the biggest and strongest.
2. Some of the baboons tried to fight the chief and they beat him.
3. The chief was important because he was the only big baboon.
4. The baboons asked the chief to wear something on his head so they could recognise him.
5. The baboons gave the chief a crown to wear on his head.
6. The baboon chief was angry with the other baboons because they didn't bring him the best food.
7. The baboon chief told the baboons to tie a scarf round his head.
8. The baboons took off the scarf when the chief shouted, "Take it off!"
9. The baboon chief fell off the rocks on to the ground far below.
10. The other baboons jumped off the rock on top of the baboon chief.

B. What do these words mean?

Choose the right meaning for these words.

1. A troop is....
 - a) a group of monkeys, baboons or apes who live together
 - b) a group of ten baboons
 - c) a family of baboons with one father, one mother and their children
2. A crown is...
 - a) a piece of coloured silk worn by a king
 - b) a hat made of cloth
 - c) a king or queen's head covering usually made of precious metal and jewels
3. A scarf is...
 - a) a necklace
 - b) a piece of cloth usually worn around the neck
 - c) a long, thin piece of leather
4. A tyrant is...
 - a) a king or chief
 - b) a big, old monkey or baboon
 - c) a cruel ruler who treats his people badly

C. What do you think?

Do strong, cruel people often become leaders?

How can weaker people stop them?

Do you think this story has a happy ending?

D. Tell the story again

Work with a friend. Tell the story to each other. Try to remember exactly what happened, and take the parts of the baboon chief and the other baboons.



[\[Click here for the answers to the exercises\]](#)

Answers to the Exercises

[\[Click here to return to the exercises\]](#)

[\[Click here to return to the story\]](#)

A. How much did you understand?

1. The baboons obeyed the chief because he was the biggest and strongest.

True

2. Some of the baboons tried to fight the chief and they beat him.

False. They were not strong enough or clever enough.

3. The chief was important because he was the only big baboon.

False. There were some other big baboons in the troop.

4. The baboons asked the chief to wear something on his head so they could recognise him. *True*

5. The baboons gave the chief a crown to wear on his head.

False. The baboons gave the chief a scarf to wear on his head.

6. The baboon chief was angry with the other baboons because they didn't bring him the best food.

True

7. The baboon chief told the baboons to tie a scarf round his head.

True

8. The baboons took off the scarf when the chief shouted, "Take it off!"

False. They all shouted, "Take it off!" too.

9. The baboon chief fell off the rocks on to the ground far below.

True

10. The other baboons jumped off the rock on top of the baboon chief.

True

B. What do these words mean?

1. A **troop** is a group of monkeys, baboons or apes who live together.

2. A **crown** is a king or queen's head covering usually made of precious metal and jewels.

3. A **scarf** is a piece of cloth usually worn around the neck.

4. A **tyrant** is a cruel ruler who treats his people badly.

The Wicked Stepmother

A Story from Arsi



Before you read the story

Talk with a friend about these problems

- You are alone in a forest and you hear a hyena. What will you do?
- Your baby brother has crawled into a hole and can't get out. You are too big to follow him. What will you do?
- You have bought a big present for your mother's birthday. Where can you hide it until her birthday comes?

Now read the story

Once upon a time, a man and his wife had two daughters. The parents loved each other and they loved their children too. They were very happy.

Then one day, the woman died. The husband and his two daughters cried for a long time. They were very sad now.

After a while, the man thought, "I can't cook food for my children and fetch water from the river. I need a wife, and my children need a mother."

He began to look for a wife, and soon he found one. She was a beautiful young woman, and the man fell in love with her.

"Please marry me," he said. "Be my wife, and a mother to my children."

The woman frowned.

"I want to be your wife," she said, "but I don't want to look after your children. Send them away. Then I'll marry you."

The man looked at her. She was very beautiful.

"I can't live without this woman," he thought. "I'll hide the children. They'll be all right. Perhaps she will start to love them later."

"Very well," he said. "I'll send my daughters away."

He went home and said to his children, "Tomorrow I'm getting married again, but my new wife doesn't like children. Hide in the grain store. Don't worry. She will feed you."

So the children hid in the grain store.

The man's new wife came home with him and he said to her, "My father is dead. But his spirit lives in the grain store. My grandfather's spirit and the spirits of my ancestors live there too. They are always hungry. Please feed them for me. Give them breakfast in the morning, and lunch at midday, and supper in the evening."

The woman agreed and the man went happily off to his work.

The woman obeyed her husband. Every day in the morning, at midday and in the evening, she brought food to the grain store for her husband's ancestors. And the two children ate it.

One day the woman went to the hairdresser. The hairdresser cut her hair, and they talked together.

"Please be quick," the woman said. "It's after midday. I must go and put food in the grain store for my husband's ancestors."

The hairdresser laughed.

"What?" she said. "Your husband's ancestors don't live in the grain store. His daughters live there. You are feeding your husband's daughters."

The woman was very angry.

"My husband tricked me!" she said. "Those stupid, lazy girls! I don't want to look after them. I hate them!"

She ran to the fire and picked up a pot of very hot water. She threw it into the grain store.

"I don't want you! I won't feed you!" she shouted. "Go away!"

The two sisters jumped back. The water didn't touch them. It fell on a pile of chickpeas.

The little sister began to cry.

"Our stepmother won't feed us," she said, "and I'm hungry."

"Don't worry," said the big sister. "Look. The water fell on the chickpeas. They're soft now. We can eat them."

So that day, the children ate chickpeas for their lunch.

Their father came home in the evening. His angry wife was waiting for him.

"You tricked me!" she shouted. "I know the truth now. Your ancestors don't live in the grain store. I was feeding your daughters. I won't feed them again. Do you want me to stay with you? Then take those stupid girls away."

Her husband was very sad.

"Please," he said, "they are my children. I can't send them away."

"You must choose," said his wife. "You can have me, or you can have your daughters. You can't have both."

The man looked at his wife. She was very beautiful.

"All right," he said. "I'll take them away tomorrow."

Early the next morning, he woke his daughters. He took them with him into the forest. They walked all day until the girls were tired.

"We'll stop here," the man said at last, "and sleep."

The girls lay down under a tree. Their father lay down between them. Soon the girls were asleep.

The man stood up and looked for a thick branch. He found one and put it between the girls.

"They'll feel it in the night," he thought. "They'll think that I am with them."

Then he went away and returned to his wife.

In the night the girls woke up.

"What's that noise?" the little one said.

"It's a hyena," said her sister.

"He's going to eat us!" said the little one. "I'm frightened."

"Our clothes are made of leather," her sister said. "We'll give him pieces of our clothes."

So the two girls pulled pieces of leather from their clothes and threw them to the hyena. At last he went away.

The morning came. The children were lost.

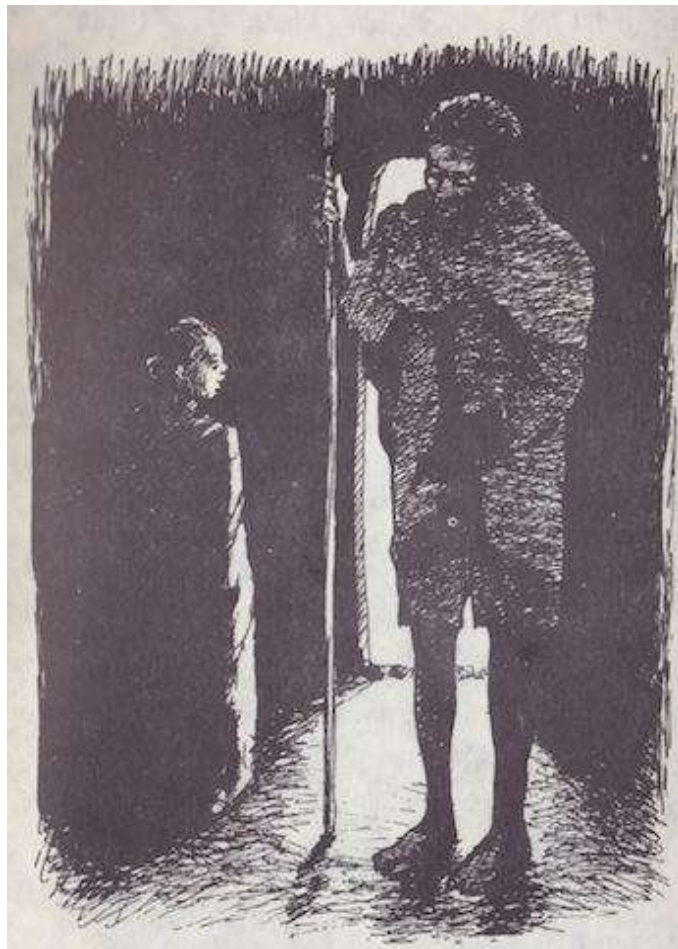
"Father's gone," the little one said. "What are we going to do?"

Her big sister climbed a tree.

"I can see a house!" she said. "It's a nice, big house. There are cows and sheep outside it."

"Let's go there," said the little one. "Perhaps the people will give us food."

The two children went to the edge of the forest. They looked at the house. A man came out of it. He was tall and ugly. His face was cruel. The children were frightened.



"He's a wizard!" the older sister said. "We must be very careful."

The two children watched and waited. The wizard went out with his cows and sheep.

"Wait here," said the older sister. "I'll go into the house and look for food."

Quickly she ran to the wizard's house, took some food and brought it back to her sister.

The next day, she went to the wizard's house again, and the next day and the next. But on the fourth day, her little sister said, "You always go to the wizard's house. It's not fair. I want to go today."

"But you can't run quickly," said her big sister. "The wizard will catch you."

"I can run quickly!" the little one said. "And I'm not going to wait here alone today. I'm going to the wizard's house with you."

At last the big sister agreed, and they ran to the wizard's house together. The big sister came out quickly, but the little sister was too slow. She stayed in the house too long. The wizard came in and caught her. He put her in a sack and tied a rope round it. Then he pulled the sack up to the rafters of the house.

"I've got you and I'm going to keep you," he said.

The big sister was hiding outside the house. She waited for a long time. At last the wizard came out and took his sheep and cattle away to pasture.

Then the big sister ran into the wizard's house.

"Little sister! Where are you?" she cried.

"Here! Here!" shouted the little sister.

The big sister cut the rope and pulled the sack down from the rafters. Then the two girls filled the sack with rocks and pulled it up to the rafters again.

In the evening, the wizard came home.

"Little girl," he said. "I've got you and I'm going to keep you."

He hit the sack with his stick. At once the sack opened. The rocks fell out on top of the wizard and he died.

The two girls stayed in his house. They looked after the cows and the sheep and they were very happy.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

The characters in the story had some big problems. They had to find answers to their problems.

What did they do?

Work with a friend. Tell each other your answers.

1. The children's father thought, "I can't cook for my children and fetch water from the river. I need a wife and my children need a mother."

What did he do?

2. The man's new wife refused to feed his children.

What did the children's father do?

3. The children's stepmother wanted to hurt the children.

What did she do?

4. The girls' father wanted to lose his children.

What did he do?

5. A hyena came and frightened the children.

What did they do?

6. The children saw a house. A wizard came out of it.

What did the children do?

7. The wizard caught the little sister. He put her in a sack and tied the sack to the rafters.

What did the sisters do?

B Into, up, in, from, to, under, between

Choose the right words from the list below to fill the gaps in these sentences. You will need to use some words more than once.

1. The man couldn't fetch water the river.
2. The children hid the grain store.
3. The children's stepmother brought food the grain store.
4. The woman threw hot water the grain store.
5. The water fell the chick-peas.
6. The man took his daughters the forest.
7. The girls lay down a tree.
8. Their father lay down them.
9. The children went the edge of the forest.
10. The children pulled the sack to the rafters.

into, up, in, to, on, from, under, between

C What were they feeling?

If you can't answer these questions, read the story again.

1. When the man, his wife and their children were together, they were feeling
2. When the children's mother died, they were feeling
3. When the stepmother found the children in the grain store, she was feeling
4. When the children had no food, they were feeling
5. When the children saw the wizard, they were feeling
6. When the children began to live in the wizard's house, they were feeling

D. Work in a group.

Make up the story again, with your own answers to the characters' problems.

- Imagine that you are the children's father. How will you keep your wife and your children?
- Imagine that you are the wife. What will you do with the children?
- Imagine that you are the children. How will you save yourselves?
- How will your story end?

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Guide to Students' Answers

A How much did you understand?

1. He began to look for a wife, and soon he found one.
2. He went home and said to his children, "Tomorrow I'm getting married again, but my new wife doesn't like children. Hide in the grain store."
3. She ran to the fire and picked up a pot of very hot water. She threw it into the grain store.
4. He took them with him into the forest and left them there.
5. The two girls pulled pieces of leather from their clothes and threw them to the hyena.
6. The two children watched and waited. When the wizard went out, the older sister went into the house and took some food.
7. The big sister cut the rope and pulled the sack down from the rafters. Then the two girls filled the sack with rocks and pulled it up to the rafters again.

B Into, up, in, from, to, under, between

1. The man couldn't fetch water **from** the river.
2. The children hid **in** the grain store.
3. The children's stepmother brought food **to** the grain store.
4. The woman threw hot water **into** the grain store.
5. The water fell **on** the chick-peas.
6. The man took his daughters **into** the forest.
7. The girls lay down **under** a tree.
8. Their father lay down **between** them.
9. The children went **to** the edge of the forest.
10. The children pulled the sack **up** to the rafters.

C What were they feeling?

1. When the man, his wife and their children were together, they were feeling **happy/very happy**.
2. When the children's mother died, they were feeling **sad/very sad**.
3. When the stepmother found the children in the grain store, she was feeling **angry/very angry**.
4. When the children had no food, they were feeling **hungry**.
5. When the children saw the wizard, they were feeling **frightened**.
6. When the children began to live in the wizard's house, they were feeling **happy/very happy**.